

The Times Dispatch

Business Office... Times Dispatch Building 20 South Tenth Street. Richmond, Va. Telephone 1234. Washington Bureau... Munsey Building 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W., Washington, D. C. Lynchburg Bureau... 115 Eighth Street Lynchburg, Va. Telephone 1234.

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1913.

WILL YOU VOTE YOUR STOCK?

Next spring one of the largest business corporations in Virginia meets to elect its president and directors. Those directors will cooperate with a special executive committee, separately chosen, and are entrusted with all the interests of the shareholders, and seldom assemble.

There has been some alarm as to the authority of the directors and some question as to the charter under which the corporation is operated. There have likewise been rumors that certain stockholders of the company, who are also its employees, have a combination which they think will control the majority of the stock.

All of these things interest the shareholders, for upon the choice of a capable president and vice directors depends in no small measure the individual dividends from his investment. His liability as a stockholder, and his satisfaction with the management of his affairs.

It so happens that the basis of the corporation are closed today. Voting at the shareholders' meeting will be determined by the list as it stands tonight. Everything depends upon action at once.

The corporation is the city of Richmond, the president is the Mayor, the directors are the Councilmen, the shareholders' meeting is the June election, when these officers are nominated.

You are a stockholder, Mr. Citizen. Will you think of voting your stock in buying your poll tax today?

JUST A WOMAN'S HEART. In a report, as they dwell her moments, they wonder why she did it, what could have possessed Mrs. Lott last evening, first among beauties richest among widows, to cut the bonds of lifelong friendship, and to sail as a missionary for the Philippine Islands.

When Mrs. Parhurst landed in England results it is not believed that the police who arrested her welcomed her with the old song, "Sweet Emma, come for you I'll sing."

MR. GLASGOW'S REPORT.

It should be a source of pride to all Richmond people that when the city went in quest of the world's greatest expert to advise us regarding our municipal gas work, that one undoubted authority should prove to be a native of Richmond. Mr. Glasgow's report to the Administrative Board, a digest of which we print this morning, is evidence that the distinction he has gained is most deserved. It is evidence, too, of a love for his native city, a love that leaves freely at our disposal the fruits of his ripe experience.

With Mr. Glasgow's chief recommendation—that the works shall be placed in charge of an expert gas engineer, with the present superintendent as his business assistant—The Times-Dispatch fully agrees. To our mind there is but one way in which to operate a technical enterprise, and that is to place in absolute authority a man trained to proficiency, a master of that craft. Any other course is shortsighted and uneconomical, and must result in inefficiency and waste.

The explanation of this we take to be that a capable engineer will direct the burden of attempting to persuade a City Council to make the improvements the service demands. This was intimated by Mr. Homer in his recent address to the Council committee, when he declared that one of the greatest failures of municipal ownership was the delay in making improvements, the calm unconcern with which recommendations were received, and the assurance with which a municipality rejected expert advice.

Richmond must have an expert gas engineer. That much is clear from experience and from Mr. Glasgow's report. But we can never hope to procure such an authority until we have so revised our system of administering the gas department that we will place at the disposal of the engineer means and authority with which to bring our works to the highest degree of efficiency. And this applies with equal force to every department of the city's business where technical knowledge is needed.

We shall have more to say on this fruitful theme in a later time, and we shall also discuss in detail the very interesting report of the city's water supply presented to the Administrative Board yesterday.

A LEAN YEAR.

This year is recorded as a lean one in American history. In the first annual report of Secretary of Agriculture Houston, a part of which appeared in our issue of yesterday, is his finding that the production of crops in the United States in 1913 was materially below the average. The yield per acre of all crops combined, due to drought, was smaller than in any year of the last decade, with the exception of 1911.

Wheat production, with an estimated total of 14,000,000 bushels, was the lowest recorded in the United States in history, although it is almost everywhere less than last year's. Corn production, with an estimated total of 2,000,000 bushels, was also the lowest recorded in the United States in history, although it is almost everywhere less than last year's.

Significant facts to be considered in this connection are that less than 40 per cent of the land in this country is reasonably well tilled, and less than 42 per cent in yielding full returns. As Secretary Houston puts it, "with a population of less than 25,000,000 living on more than 2,000,000,000 acres, it is unnecessary to speak as if our territory had been much more than ploughed." In the light of these figures, we must perceive the vital importance of all movements which aim at the immediate or ultimate increased production.

A REAL FISCAL POLICY.

When the Senate Finance Committee meets next week it should not only draft an appropriation bill, but outline a real fiscal policy for the Commonwealth.

This is something Virginia has always lacked. Given their final form in the heated hours of a dying legislative session, our appropriation bills have never been couched in constructive statesmanship. Too often they have borne the marks of ephemeral compromise, of temporizing, of personal ambition, of political influence.

The result of this has been that our State departments and institutions have never been able to plan in advance. All their hopes and all their dreams have ended with the meeting of the next Assembly. They have never been allowed to proceed with the assurance that future wants and future growth would be intelligently met.

With peculiar force this applies to our institutions for the insane and to our public school system. Here boards charged with public work of vital importance have worked in the dark. The general hospital board has met from year to year and has agreed upon the terms of its application to the Assembly, but has never known how its requests will be received. It may be that pressing wants at the Central State Hospital are more necessary than improvements at the Western, though both needs are stated in the report of the general board.

Even more necessary is some definite and continuous provision for the public schools. Heretofore, the Assembly has dealt beautifully, though not always wisely, with the great cause of public education. Such funds as have not otherwise been appropriated have, with commendable liberality, been given the public schools, yet given for varied and uncertain uses. Even the flat appropriation of half a million dollars, which it has been customary to give in addition to the school revenue set apart by the Constitution, is not a stable asset of the State Board of Education.

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RECASTING CITY GOVERNMENTS.

Modeling of modern charters for American cities proceeded this year with increased activity, although there was and is a distinct tendency to depart from the beaten path of commission government in its original type. In most of the new forms of city administration which have been established in 1913 the commission principle is present, but there is a noticeable movement to modify its strict application as exemplified in the Texas cities and those which have imitated it.

The city manager plan with strong and similar in its modified aspects is gaining ground. Columbus, O., has seized upon this idea, and a charter commission is now drafting a form of government which will be submitted to the voters. It will provide for the election of a Mayor to have charge of the police and fire departments, and of a Council of four men, elected from districts. This small Council, together with the Mayor, will be substituted for the present body of nineteen members, and will select a city manager. The auditor and city attorney are to be elected by the people. The Mayor is to be the chief conservator of the peace, will directly supervise the police and fire departments, under proper civil service regulations, and will represent the city in all of its relations with other municipalities and with the State. The Mayor and the four Council members constitute the City Council, over which the Mayor presides, and in which he has a veto. The City Council is to appoint a Treasurer and a city manager, who is to supervise all departments of the municipal government, with the exception of those committed to the Mayor, the auditor and the attorney. The manager is to be removable by the Council, and is, of course, directly answerable to it for the conduct of the service under him. The term of Councilmen and elected officers is to be four years, subject to recall, but to be elected every two years. Under this plan the City Council members would be elected at large, and exclusive of the Mayor, would serve without compensation. All elections are to be by nonpartisan ballot, according to the proposed charter.

Columbus, however, works under practically no restrictions in shaping its new form of administration, for Ohio in 1912 broadened the freedom of municipalities by giving them home rule, so that without invoking the aid of the Legislature, they may change their own forms of government and exercise all powers within their corporate limits not inconsistent with the general laws of the State. Ohio municipalities are permitted, by a vote of two-thirds of the Council or upon petition of 10 per cent of the electors, to create a charter commission, who shall prepare a charter for submission to the people, which is to go into effect upon their approval. The municipalities of every State ought to be equally free to exercise the right of self-government under whatever form they desire to establish.

WHAT WAS NEWS FIFTY YEARS AGO

Reprinted from This Newspaper. General Bragg Relinquishes Command. General Bragg has published his farewell order to the Army of Tennessee, transferring the command to Lieutenant-General William J. Hardee.

The Senate convened yesterday with Mr. Hunter of Virginia, in the chair. The proceedings were opened with prayer by the Rev. Moses P. Hodge of the Presbyterian Church. The House was called to order by Speaker Beback.

Our correspondent writes: "Doubtless some of your hot-house critics in Richmond will announce generally that Lee for not having fallen back upon Meade and crushed him before he could get back across the Rappahannock, so then Lee did not do his best, although it is quite true. I believe that General Lee was disposed to have attacked Meade on Tuesday, but was dissuaded from doing so by the advice of his lieutenant-general. It is equally true that he intended to have fought Meade on Wednesday certain, but Meade had retreated and did not want to fight. He will say, I think, that he intended to fight on Saturday, but was prevented by the rainstorm, and that, losing this opportunity, General Lee had time to make the position of his army more favorable to risk a fight, and hence he had no other alternative than to go back to Culpeper. He could not well go to Fredericksburg because of the lack of fuel on both sides of the river."

Belgium's recovery, which were broken up by the strike of the coal-miners, have been resumed, and these meetings are nightly attended by eager crowds, who make the woods resound with praise of the Most High.

The court at Jackson practically exonerated the Lord of Blaine for his conduct in defense of New Orleans, and his connection with its capture.

Campbell County's Record. Campbell County, Va., has approached at different times since the war the honor of being the largest producer of iron and steel in this State. This is not a boast, for the county has been producing iron and steel since the war.

The Bible Society. The Rev. Dr. Hoge of this city is to deliver at St. Paul's church an address before the Bible Society of Virginia in relation to the origin and work of the British and Foreign Bible Societies.

Stage Blocked. General Longstreet has raised the siege of Knoxville in consequence of the heavy reinforcements received by Fort Mifflin.

From the Southwest. General Sherman Lee has concluded a most successful campaign for American cities proceeded this year with increased activity, although there was and is a distinct tendency to depart from the beaten path of commission government in its original type.

From the Rappahannock. The county is recovering from the effects of the Rappahannock and the Rappahannock.

Denounces Prohibition. The editorial referring to the approaching fight in England says: "Prohibition is a failure, and a failure which is being recognized by the people of the world."

Praise for Dr. McIntire. We note Dr. McIntire's address in Richmond with pleasure. It is a fine example of a Virginia address.

A Family of Irons. Jefferson Davis must have made an intelligent selection of his private secretary. The Davisons appear to be a family of iron.

The Governor's Message. Governor Letcher has sent his message to the General Assembly. The message is a long one, and contains many important points.

One More Bad Precedent Broken. The House has passed a resolution which is a bad precedent, but it is broken.

Telegraphic Feat. Yesterday a telegram of the President's address, containing 1,200 words, was telegraphed from the office in Richmond and reached Montgomery and the intermediate points of Wilmington, Augusta, Albany and Atlanta at 1 o'clock, before its reading was completed in the two houses of Congress, which had convened at noon.

The Pension Class. A correspondent of the Richmond Times-Dispatch, who claims to be a Confederate veteran, complains that he is being denied a pension because he is not a native-born citizen.

Our Chief Abomination. This is the chief abomination which property owners are being asked to support. It is a tax on property which is a burden on the people.

Abraham Lincoln. A portrait of Abraham Lincoln is being displayed in the city. It is a fine example of the artist's skill.

RESTAURANT. A new restaurant has been opened in the city. It is a fine example of the chef's skill.

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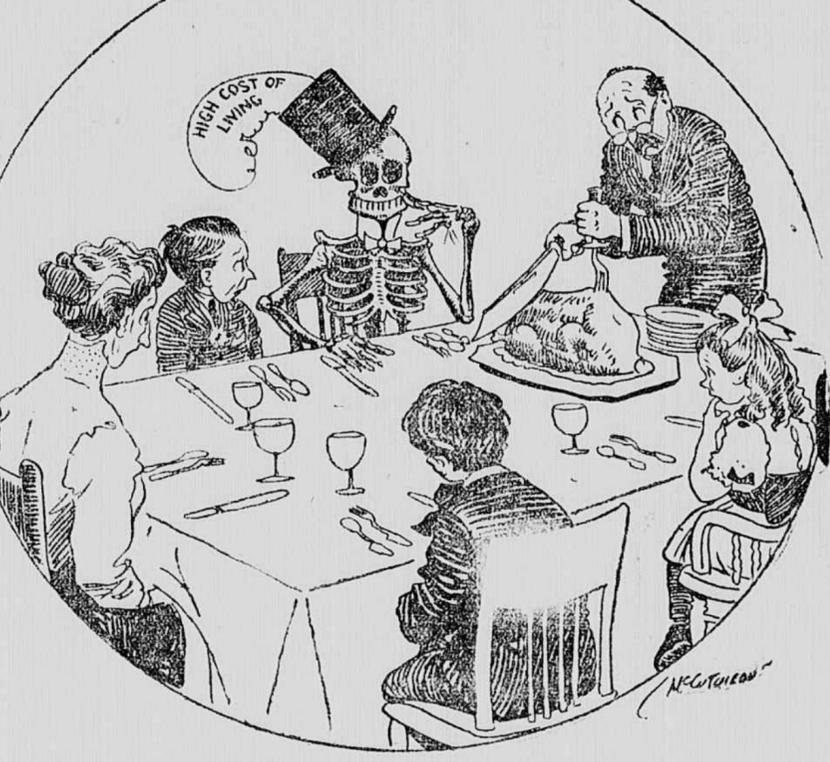
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HE WILL BE A GUEST AT YOUR CHRISTMAS DINNER.

By John T. McCutcheon. (Copyright, 1913, by John T. McCutcheon.)



Views of the Virginia Editors

To Stop Pollution of James River. A systematic campaign will be conducted during the present winter by which it is expected to put through the Legislature a bill having for its purpose stopping further pollution of the river and its tributaries.

Always Boosting Richmond. What do you think about Greensboro being ahead of Richmond in one thing at least? It is, for we have the worst of the Richmond Times-Dispatch for it. Advertising more electric signs for its streets, that paper says.

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